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НОЕМВРИ 2015 ГОДИНА  
СКОПЈЕ, РЕПУБЛИКА МАКЕДОНИЈА**

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## INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE COUNTRIES' COMMITMENT FOR DEVELOPING POLICIES

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**Abstract:** *Climate change is not only a modern term that is constantly used in international politics to show awareness about this significant issue in the world media, or as a subject that states have to consider as important in the future when the world will be politically and economically more stable. Climate change has become a global political and environmental challenge for humanity over the last decades. Therefore, coordinate approach of the countries and international strategy for disaster risk reduction and multiple actions on climate change is more than needed. At the same time, climate change policies cannot be developed in isolation from the overall development context. For that reason, more than 150 countries representing around 90% of all global emissions in USA already have offered climate pledges and last month, 81 companies from across the American economy signed the American Businesses Act on Climate Pledge to demonstrate their commitment to climate action and show their support for a strong international climate agreement. Ahead of the forthcoming Summit on climate change in Paris (December 2015), more than 200 Colleges and Universities in USA sign the American Campus Act on Climate Pledge to demonstrate support for strong international climate action. Countries are aiming to reach Agreement in Paris on a deal that will come into force from 2020. This means ensuring each nation pledges its own 'nationally determined contribution' for post-2020 action. The agreement should include ambitious national plans for action from 2020 onward, and a package of pre-2020 action, with more ambitious national mitigation pledges, better delivery of existing financial commitments and more action in key sectors, such as energy efficiency, renewable energy deployment and forest protection.*

**Keywords:** *States, governance, commitments, environment, challenge*

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## Introduction

Since 2011, countries have been meeting regularly to negotiate a new international Climate Agreement, with the goal of adopting that Agreement at the end of 2015, at the 21st conference of the Parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (the Convention) in Paris. Climate change is now imminent. Changes in weather patterns including extreme weather events are impacting every nation on Earth, and impacts are being felt most severely by the poor and vulnerable. Many solutions are available and being implemented, but they are not yet being deployed at the scale or speed required to accomplish an orderly transition to a low-carbon, and climate-resilient economy. The 2015 Agreement in Paris represents a critical opportunity to send unambiguous signals that the world will shift its economic and social activity toward more climate-friendly and sustainable pathways.<sup>1</sup>

Climate change requires global agreement on certain actions and solutions but it is clear that the 2015 Paris Agreement will have strong roots in national decision-making. In order to provide balance between a wholly nationally driven approach and multilateral rules and norms, the choice was made to include a specific long-term goal for mitigation and a long-term goal for adaptation. These goals are focused on motivating, and providing overarching guidance to, the specific national actions that will be undertaken by Parties individually and collectively. Another counter-balancing factor to the lack of multilateral rules and norms, which some members of the consortium believe would facilitate greater ambition, was to include a provision to update the commitments regularly through five-year cycles of continuous improvement, combined with a decision that countries not roll back their commitments but rather commit to strengthening them at regular short-term (five-year) intervals. The ACT 2015 suggested legal text proposes three cycles of continuous improvement that apply to different policy areas, but are equally important in the Agreement: mitigation, adaptation, and support.

## American Business Act on Climate Pledge

The White House will announced new commitments from companies from across the American economy who are joining the American Business Act on Climate Pledge. With this announcement, 81 companies will have signed the American Business Act on Climate Pledge to demonstrate their support for action on climate change and the conclusion of a climate change agreement in Paris that takes a strong step forward toward a low-carbon, sustainable future. These 81 companies have operations in all 50 states, employ over 9 million people, represent more than \$3 trillion in annual revenue, and have a combined market capitalization of over \$5 trillion.

By signing the American Business Act on Climate pledge, these companies are:

- Voicing support for a strong Paris outcome: The pledge recognizes those countries that have already put forward climate targets, and voices support for a strong outcome in the Paris climate negotiations.
- Demonstrating an ongoing commitment to climate action: As part of this initiative, each company is announcing significant pledges to reduce their

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<sup>1</sup> World Resources Institute,  
[http://www.wri.org/sites/default/files/uploads/ACT2015\\_LegalSuggestions.pdf](http://www.wri.org/sites/default/files/uploads/ACT2015_LegalSuggestions.pdf), Last accessed  
November 23, 2015

emissions, increase low-carbon investments, deploy more clean energy, and take other actions to build more sustainable businesses and tackle climate change.

These pledges include ambitious, company-specific goals such as:

- Reducing emissions by as much as 50 percent,
- Reducing water usage by as much as 80 percent,
- Achieving zero waste-to-landfill,
- Purchasing 100 percent renewable energy, and
- Pursuing zero net deforestation in supply chains.

The impacts of climate change are already being felt worldwide. Nineteen of the 20 hottest years on record occurred in the past two decades. Countries and communities around the world are already being affected by deeper, more persistent droughts, pounded by more severe weather, inundated by bigger storm surges, and imperiled by more frequent and dangerous wildfires. Rising temperatures can lead to more smog, longer allergy seasons, and an increased incidence of extreme-weather-related injuries, all of which imperil public health, particularly for vulnerable populations like children, the elderly, the sick, the poor, and some communities of color. No corner of the planet and no sector of the global economy will remain unaffected by climate change in the years ahead.

Climate change is a global challenge that demands a global response, and President Barack Obama is committed to leading the fight. The President's Climate Action Plan, when fully implemented, will cut nearly 6 billion tons of carbon pollution through 2030, an amount equivalent to taking all the cars in the United States off the road for more than 4 years. The Clean Power Plan, the most significant domestic step any President has ever taken to combat climate change, will reduce emissions from the energy sector by 32% by 2030. And while the United States is leading on the international stage and the federal government is doing its part to combat climate change, hundreds of private companies, local governments, and foundations have stepped up to [increase energy efficiency](#), [boost low-carbon investing](#), and [make solar energy more accessible](#) to low-income Americans.

The measures taken by the public and private sectors enabled President Obama to set an ambitious but achievable goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions economy-wide by 26-28% by 2025 last November. And in the eleven months since, we've seen unprecedented global momentum in the fight against climate change.

To date, 150 countries representing more than 85% of global carbon emissions have reported post-2020 climate policies to the United Nations. This includes the major economies like the U.S., China, the European Union and India and it includes a large number of smaller economies, developing nations, island states and tropical countries – some of whom are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

But these submissions are only the beginning of achieving a successful outcome in Paris this December (2015) that puts in place a transparent global framework for increasing ambition over time and continuing to drive down emissions over the course of this century. As the world looks toward Paris, President Obama is committed to building on this momentum, with American leadership at all levels – the federal government, state and local governments and the private sector.<sup>2</sup>

With less than two weeks until the President attends the Conference on Climate Change, the US Administration is committed to building momentum and ensuring a variety of stakeholders are at the table to act on climate. As part of that effort, the White House on November 19, 2015 announced that more than 200 university and college campuses signed the *American Campuses Act on Climate Pledge*<sup>3</sup> to demonstrate their support for strong climate action by world leaders in Paris in December this year. These schools include historically black colleges and universities, religious institutions, women's colleges, technical schools, community colleges, all schools in the Ivy League, and a variety of public and private universities located across more than 40 states.

The institutions signing the Pledge are also already taking significant action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase campus sustainability and resilience, and incorporate environmental action into academic curriculum. More than 100 of the schools that signed the pledge have also set goals to become carbon neutral within the next few decades. In addition, *Defend Our Future* launched a new climate change campus campaign to empower more than 1 million young Americans to take decisive action on climate change. Along with the launch of the campaign, a bikeshare company based in Santa Monica, California called Cyclehop, has committed to expanding access to smart-bikes on college campuses across the country.

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<sup>2</sup> The White House, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/10/19/fact-sheet-white-house-announces-commitments-american-business-act>, last accessed on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015

<sup>3</sup> In USA 218 campuses representing over 3.3 million students across the country are committing to take action on climate by signing *American Campuses on Climate Pledge*: “As institutions of higher education, we applaud the progress already made to promote clean energy and climate action as we seek a comprehensive, ambitious agreement at the upcoming United Nations Climate Negotiations in Paris. We recognize the urgent need to act now to avoid irreversible costs to our global community’s economic prosperity and public health and are optimistic that world leaders will reach an agreement to secure a transition to a low carbon future. Today our school pledges to accelerate the transition to low-carbon energy while enhancing sustainable and resilient practices across our campus.”



The impacts of climate change are already being felt worldwide and President Obama recognizes the importance of collaboration and working across sectors to address the impacts of climate change. These actions are a great step forward in highlighting American leadership on climate action and ensuring a successful global agreement on climate change next month<sup>4</sup>.

## **Canada's Climate Plan**

Canada will be heading to the UN-sponsored summit in 2015 with a limited national strategy and carbon rules that vary widely between provinces. During the recent federal election campaign, the Prime Minister Justin Trudeau promised to allow Canada's provinces to continue to write their own climate rules. Quebec and Ontario have developed a system of cap and trade, British Columbia has a carbon tax and Alberta will now have a mixture of both systems.

Alberta's plan, released on 22 November 2015, also features a phase-out of coal-fired power in the next 15 years, a 10-year goal to nearly halve methane emissions, as well as incentives for renewable energy. Alberta's Climate Leadership Plan accelerates the transition from coal to renewable electricity sources, puts a price on carbon pollution for everyone, and sets emissions limits for the oil sands.

Alberta's NDP government is imposing an economy-wide carbon tax starting in 2017 and a cap on emissions from the oil sands in a sweeping plan aimed at showing it is serious about fighting climate change. Even so, the plans won plaudits from powerful oil executives along with environmental groups.

There are no hard targets, but under the strategy carbon emissions are projected to begin to fall under today's levels by 2030. The NDP had already announced plans to double the carbon levy on major industrial emitters.

The new carbon tax is expected to raise \$3-billion annually by 2018, but the government will not be cutting any provincial taxes. Some of the new revenue will be spent on technology to fight climate change and the NDP has committed to helping the lower-earning 60 per cent of households cope with some of the increased transportation and heating costs through an "adjustment fund." New measures of this Alberta's Plan include:

- A 100-megaton cap on carbon emissions from the oil sands, Canada's fastest-growing source of emissions, once new rules are adopted. It currently emits 70 megatonnes annually.

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<sup>4</sup> White House, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/11/19/fact-sheet-ahead-conference-climate-change-more-200-colleges-and>, last accessed November 20, 2015

- An economy-wide tax of \$20 per tonne on carbon-dioxide emissions starting in 2017, rising to \$30 in 2018. Equal to seven cents per litre of gasoline, the average household will see heating and transportation costs increase by \$470 annually by 2018.
- Incentives to have nearly one-third of power generated from renewable such as wind and solar by 2030.<sup>5</sup>

## **EU Environment and Climate Change**

Environmental quality is considered central to health and well-being. Since the 1970s, the European Union (EU) and its member countries have introduced laws to ensure the careful use of natural resources, to minimize adverse environmental impacts of production and consumption, and to protect biodiversity and natural habitats. Based on Title XX of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, EU environment law covers aspects as wide-ranging as waste management, air and water quality, greenhouse gases and toxic chemicals.

The EU integrates environmental concerns in its other policies, e.g. transport and energy, and is a major global force in pushing for tighter environmental standards and for effective action against climate change.

In the forefront of the UN Climate Change Conference held in Copenhagen, the EU Committed to cut emissions at least 20% of 1990 levels by 2020. This shall be achieved by reducing energy consumption by 20% through improved energy efficiency and increasing the renewable energy's share of the market to 20%. To implement these targets, the EC put forward a major package of legislative measures which was signed into law in April 2009. In order to meet the new EU target, Annex I and II countries will most likely need to offset their own emissions by implementing mitigation programs in developing and less-developed EU, and soon to be EU countries such as Macedonia (UNDP 2010). New member states, which signed the Kyoto Protocol not as part of the EU but individually, are only required to meet their own reduction targets. For that reason, an Annex I country joining the EU would have no binding emissions reductions, although the European Parliament encourages such countries to reduce their emissions nonetheless (Schreurs and Tiberghien 2007; Vainio 2007)<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Business News Network, <http://www.bnn.ca/News/2015/11/23/Alberta-aims-to-clean-up-its-act-and-its-reputation-with-a-new-climate-strategy.aspx>, last accessed November 23, 2015

<sup>6</sup> Georg Schoen, "*Climate change governance and Macedonia*", (2010), Political Thought, magazine for Political and societal issues, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Institute for Democracy, Year 8, Number 29, March, Skopje, 2010, ISSN 1409-9853, pg.22.

## **Macedonian Climate Change Policy**

Republic of Macedonia acceded to the UNFCCC<sup>7</sup> in 1998 and to the Kyoto Protocol in 2004. The Ministry of Environment and physical planning (MOEPP) is the focal point for the UNFCCC, and also the Designated National Authority for the CDM.

The Climate Change Project Office was set up in 2000 and sits as a unit within the MOEPP, driving work on climate change within the ministry. The National Climate Change Committee (NCCC) is separate from the MOEPP and is composed of representatives of government (including inter-alia, ministries of the Environment, Finance, Transport, Economy, Education and Science, Health and Agriculture, Forestry and Water, NGOs, the private sector and research organizations. The function of the NCCC is to oversee national policies on climate change and to ensure that these policies are consistent with national development strategies and priorities. Implementation of environmental policy occurs through a wide range of public and private sector entities, and the MOEPP is only the coordinator of environmental policy.

Republic of Macedonia has started to integrate climate change into national strategic planning documents and laws. Article 4 of the Law on the Environment explicitly mentions 'Restraining greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere' and encouraging the use of clean technologies and renewable energy. The 2nd National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP), and the National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD - funded by Sida) both include climate change, with Energy and Climate being identified as key elements in achieving the goals of the NSSD. The focus in the NSSD is to develop a less carbon intensive energy sector (through both switching supply and increasing efficiency) and to engage strongly with the CDM. Measures in the strategy to conserve and manage natural resources will also improve the adaptive capacity of ecosystems.

Decentralization is a key pillar of the national strategies of Macedonia, and as such it is local government and other local actors who will be tasked with the implementation of many of these plans. The government recognizes the need to rapidly build the capacity in these actors if national environmental strategies are to be successfully implemented. To provide local authorities with the capacity needed to implement environmental regulations, the government estimates that it needs to more than double the number of civil servants responsible for environmental

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<sup>7</sup> United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is an international environmental [treaty](#) (currently the only international climate policy venue with broad legitimacy, due in part to its virtually universal membership) negotiated at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), informally known as the [Earth Summit](#), held in [Rio de Janeiro](#) from 3 to 14 June 1992.

implementation in local authorities and greatly increase the number of official inspectors.

EU membership can be considered as the overall strategic objective for current development policies in Macedonia, and strategy documents such as the 2nd National Environmental Action Plan are aimed at the requirements in the EU acquis, and harmonization of environmental policies.

The second National Communication has strengthened national capacity on preparing greenhouse gas inventories; however several institutional and legislative measures need to be adopted to further strengthen and embed this procedure. This inventory will serve as the background for the establishment of a GHG registry, which is a country requirement for EU accession.<sup>8</sup>

In July 2015, Republic of Macedonia has submitted its new climate action plan to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

This Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) comes well in advance of a new universal climate change agreement which will be reached at the UN climate conference in Paris, in December this year. Including Macedonia, 51 parties to the UNFCCC have formally submitted their INDCs. According to the expectations, the Paris agreement will come into effect in 2020, empowering all countries to act to prevent average global temperatures rising above 2 degrees Celsius and to reap the many opportunities that arise from a necessary global transformation to clean and sustainable development.

UNFCCC Executive Secretary is encouraging countries to come forward with their INDCs as soon as they are able, underlining their commitment and support towards this successful outcome in Paris. Governments agreed to submit their INDCs in advance of Paris. Countries have agreed that there will be no back-tracking in these national climate plans, meaning that the level of ambition to reduce emissions will increase over time.<sup>9</sup>

## Conclusion

The impacts of climate change are already being felt worldwide. Nineteen of the 20 hottest years on record occurred in the past two decades. Countries and communities around the world are already being affected by deeper, more persistent droughts, pounded by more severe weather, inundated by bigger storm surges, and imperiled by more frequent and dangerous wildfires.

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<sup>8</sup> We adapt, <https://www.weadapt.org/knowledge-base/national-adaptation-planning/macedonia>, last accessed November 24, 2015

<sup>9</sup> United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, <http://newsroom.unfccc.int/unfccc-newsroom/macedonia-submits-its-climate-action-plan-ahead-of-2015-paris-agreement/>, last accessed November 24, 2015

Climate change is a global challenge that demands a global response. Therefore, at the Paris summit in December 2015, 196 countries will meet to sign a new climate change agreement. This Climate Change Summit in Paris (to be held after the coordinated terrorist attacks occurred in Paris and its northern suburb, Saint-Denis, on the night of 13 November 2015) is meaningful and will make a real difference to climate action on the ground.

With the right political leadership, it can lead to ambitious outcomes that will have a real impact on tackling climate change.

Countries like the US and China are working to ensure an outcome is likely in 2015; and the years since the 2009 Copenhagen negotiations have seen some significant breakthroughs. The 2009 negotiations were fraught and chaotic, with a last minute agreement emerging after frantic scenes on the conference floor. Yet international negotiations remain vital for countries to build on national approaches, providing reassurance that they are not acting alone, and making it easier for nations to work together towards a low carbon future. The 2015 Paris summit is important. To ensure meaningful action on climate change, the deal must contain the following elements: ambitious action before and after 2020, a strong legal framework and clear rules, a central role for equity, a long term approach, public finance for adaptation and the low carbon transition, a framework for action on deforestation and land use clear links to the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals. A strong deal will make a significant difference to the ability of individual countries to tackle climate change. It will provide a clear signal to business, to guide investment toward low carbon outcomes. It will reduce the competitiveness impacts of national policies, and create a simpler, more predictable framework for companies operating in different countries. Vitally, a strong climate deal will help to meet international development aims, which are at increasing risk from rising global temperatures. Eliminating poverty, improving health and building security are all outcomes linked to tackling climate change. And it will also bring huge benefits to the natural environment by helping to avoid biodiversity loss and the degradation of ecosystems upon which we all depend.

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